



## **Eastern Snake Plain Aquifer (ESPA) Comprehensive Aquifer Management Plan**

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### **Recharge Working Group Meeting**

#### **Draft Meeting Notes April 2, 2010 10:00 am (Teleconference Call)**

The primary purpose of the Recharge Working Group meeting was to review the 2010 project submissions. The submissions include 1) Development/Expansion of Egin Lakes as a managed recharge site, 2) Recharge evaluation, monitoring and expansion in the Idaho Irrigation District area, 3) Mile Post 31 Recharge site evaluation and construction and 4) Managed recharge operations for 2011.

#### **Draft Recommendations to the Implementation Committee**

- 1) Egin Lakes Recharge Site** – The Working Group recommends pursuing Phase 2 of the proposed project for the development, monitoring and measurement of the Egin Lakes site. The estimated cost for Phase 2 is \$100,000, with \$15,000 identified through Fremont Madison Irrigation District. Additional funding partners are being sought to provide 60% match, including potentially the Eastern Idaho Water Rights Coalition (EIWRC) and the groundwater districts.
  
- 2) Idaho Irrigation District** – The Working Group recommends that the IID proposal to gather additional data and evaluate recharge sites in the IID service area be funded. The IID has identified \$36,000 for the project and is pursuing a 40% match from the Board. Work with DEQ to identify sites that have the least concerns regarding water quality.
  
- 3) Mile Post 31** – The Working Group recommends moving forward with the Mile Post 31 pilot test in 2010, in partnership with AFRD # 2. The estimated cost is between \$3,000 - \$ 5,000.
  
- 4) 2011 Managed Recharge** – The Working Group recommends setting aside resources for 2011 (need to determine amount), with further discussion needed on whether to require a funding match for the recharge efforts.

#### **2010 Early Season Recharge Status**

Bill Quinn provided an update on the 2010 early season recharge effort. It was noted that the Department has signed Agreements with FMID, IID, Oswood, Snake River Valley, Southwest Irrigation District canal companies and that AFRD#2, New Sweden, and Aberdeen Springfield canals have indicated a willingness to participate. As of March 26, 2010 a total of approximately 19,000 af has been recharged. Quinn noted that the Board's

recharge right should remain in priority up to April 15, maybe longer depending on the weather.

## **Overall Recommendations/Consideration/Discussion Topics**

### **Egin Lakes**

At the previous working group meeting, more hydrologic information was requested regarding the Egin Lakes site (see attached analysis). It was noted that there is a rise in water levels at all test monitoring wells using the current model calibration. Jeff Raybould noted that many don't think the model projections are accurate and that the Egin Lakes proposal would support a further understanding of the hydrologic response. The focus of Phase 2 (\$100,000) is on calibrating the site and determining the capacity and potential for benefits to both river flows and the deep aquifer. The goal of Phase 1 is to begin to put structures in and adding measurement capabilities and develop the knowledge that we need to implement recharge in the future, i.e. best hydrologic bang for the buck.

The following questions were raised:

- What is the percentage of recharge water that moves west versus toward the river.
- Is there a linear relationship with the water that is recharged, i.e additive or mounding the water? A: According to Alan Wylie, there is a linear relationship, i.e. if you double the amount of water the effects double.
- Is there information in change in groundwater depths in Fremont/Egin County

It is not important to determine how much goes back to river/aquifer; important part is the transit time and the timing of return to the river. Recharge is a tool and measurement and monitoring is an important to understand how best to use the tool.

Potential funding partnership for the Egin Lakes site was discussed. For the groundwater users it is hard to see the direct benefit of the actions give the costs – 3,000 af. Others noted that there is not a very large water level change. Others noted that recharge benefits to the gw users are both direct and indirect. Direct ways include water levels rise while indirect methods include increase in river flows which decreases the need for administrative remedies.

### **Idaho Irrigation District**

Alan Kelsh outlined the IID proposal and noted that the intent was to develop a concept that would support the managed recharge effort. It was noted that IID wants to be part of the recharge program but has not done a lot of work to determine the effects. The proposal would gather additional information and determine the best bang for buck – measurement of incidental recharge in the system right now. Currently there are three sites for such measurement. Part I would be fully done by spring 2011 (measurements). It was noted that the BOR might have conservation grants to support the effort. If IID owns storage, the BOR will provide ARC GIS software for no cost.

The Governor set criteria for 2010– narrow analysis of who gets the benefit? How does this project fit the criteria? IID has put up \$36K for the project and would like to see the 40% match from the project, which is consistent with criteria outlined. The question is whether the initiation of the new pilot project fit the criteria for the effort.

Mike Webster, Governor's Office, noted that the Governor wants to see projects get going and benefiting water users, instead of talking for another year. The goal is to get projects started where there are tangible benefits.

Barry Burnell, IDEQ, noted that the use of gravel pits may cause concern given the potential contamination of groundwater. IDEQ noted support for the project and indicated a willingness to work with IID to look at the water quality impacts. In general, Barry noted that DEQ would prefer to have locations that have sand/soil filtration for groundwater protection.

### **Mile Post 31**

General background – MP 31 on the Milner Gooding Canal is ideally suited for passive recharge/gravity flow. AFRD #2 plan in put in place to some type of development for recharge. The Board has a BLM ROW permit in hand to initiate pilot project. There are two monitoring wells at MP 31 in excellent conditions with water level monitoring devices. There are a small number of domestic wells 1 -2 miles to the southeast and would be part of the water quality monitoring plan.

Discussions with AFRD #2 management – may share costs for the small diversions which may come out of the recharge wheeling fees. Further discussion with Committee and Board required. A cost of \$3,000 was identified with a cost share arrangement for 2010.

### **Managed Recharge 2011**

The Working Group discussed the managed recharge effort for 2011 (the Board has already allocated \$400,000 for 2010 recharge) and whether proponents will need to contribute 60% of the costs. If so, participants will need advance timeframe to determine if/when they will contribute 60% of the managed recharge costs. Another question raised is whether the Board should continue to fund recharge money regardless of user contribution? It was noted that Board contribution to recharge reduces the pool of funds for the grant/loan program.

Determine how to move forward with proposals if they do not have the 60% funding identified.

Should the Committee reserve some of the \$2.4 million be reserved for recharge operations in future years? It was noted again that resources contributed to recharge are

not available for the Board's loan/grant program in the future. The WG recommended identified reserving some funds for 2011.

Is a cost sharing required? Need further discussion.

**Recharge Working Group Meeting Attendees:**

Bill Quinn

Brian Patton

Lynn Tominaga

Jim Tucker

Dan Temple

Jonathan Bartsch

Alan Kelsch

Mike Webster

Rebecca Casper

Barry Burnell

Scott Clausen

Walt Poole

Jeff Raybould

Peter Anderson

Stan Hawkins

David Blue

Craig Evans

Jon Bowling

Linda Lemmon